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## Sermon on the Gospel for the First Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 16, 19—31.

“I believe the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting”—these are the closing words of the Third Article of our Creed. In these words we confess our belief of a life after death, and in this our confession and belief we are borne out by Holy Scripture. The Bible plainly teaches a resurrection of the body from the grave and an eternal life in the world to come. Thus we read John 5, 28, 29: “The hour is coming,” etc. Again we are told by the prophet Daniel: “Many of them that sleep,” etc. And St. John tells us in his Revelation that he saw in the spirit the great day of judgment, and behold, “the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.”—And not less plainly does Scripture teach an eternal existence of man after the resurrection. “The Lord shall deliver me,” etc., 2 Tim. 4, 18, joyfully exclaims St. Paul. And to the penitent thief on the cross, who had only a few more hours to live in this world, the Savior promises: “Verily, I say unto thee,” etc., Luke 23, 43.

From these passages it is evident that there is an existence after death. The time will come, when, our body raised from the grave and reunited with the soul, we shall enter a new existence that will never end. And that life in the world to come will be a life of retribution, where the righteous will enter a state of happiness and bliss, while the wicked will be punished for their evil deeds and cast out into everlasting misery and torment. Our Lord Himself tells us that “the wicked shall then go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” And John, in the passage before quoted, says that “they that have done good shall rise,” etc., John 5, 29.

From this we learn that, in the world to come, the righteous and the wicked shall be separated, that there will be two different places to which these two classes will then be consigned, the one being heaven, the place of everlasting happiness, the future abode of the

pious, and hell, the place of neverending torment, to which the wicked and the devils will be relegated. Of these two places we read in to-day's Gospel. There we are introduced to two men: to poor, miserable, but pious Lazarus, who, dying, was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, where he is comforted for all his sufferings on earth; and to the rich man, who, on account of his wickedness and unbelief, after his death found himself in hell, in the place of torments and woe. It is especially the fate of the latter that the text dwells upon, thus bringing this terrible subject before us. God grant that its contemplation may serve us as a warning to flee from the wrath to come and to escape the endless woe of hell, while yet we have time to save our souls.

#### THE PLACE OF TORMENT,

then, is what shall now occupy our attention.

1. *Let us contemplate its nature, and*
2. *Let us learn how we may escape it.*

##### 1.

"And in hell he lift up his eyes . . . tormented in this flame." Here we are told that the rich man, after his death, was cast into hell, where he was in great torments, in excessive pain. And what the nature of this pain was he tells us himself when he says to Abraham: "I am tormented in this flame." The torture of hell, then, will be an endless burning in inextinguishable fire. We find the same expression in numerous other passages of Scripture. "Their worm shall not die," etc., Is. 66, 24. Christ Himself speaks of the "fire of hell," and, according to His description, the great Judge of the world will say to those at His left hand: "Depart from me," etc., Matt. 25, 41. And in the Apocalypse we read that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever." The pain that is suffered by a person in the fire is the most dreadful one that can be imagined in this life. Now, of course, we must not imagine that the fire of hell will be anything like our fire here on earth which consumes everything that is put into it. The fire of hell will not consume those consigned to it, but will only torment them, as we are told in the text. And that is where the point of resemblance lies: as fire, before it extinguishes the life and consumes the body, subjects the unhappy person to sufferings too terrible to imagine, so the fire of hell will inflict torments upon the bodies of the damned which will cause them to writhe and shriek with the intensity of their suffering, for in that place of torment, as Christ Himself tells us, there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

How great, how terrible their sufferings will be, we can gather from the fact, that the rich man implores Abraham to send Lazarus that he might "dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue." When a person, in the agony of sickness and the heat of fever, lies



suffering upon his bed, he will beg again and again for cold water to cool his parched lips. And oh! what a refreshment it is to him! But this sufferer in the flames of hell does not ask for a drink, he does not even dare to ask for a drop of water, nay, he begs that Lazarus may dip the extreme tip of his finger in water and thus cool his burning tongue! Oh, how his tongue must have burned within his mouth, that the cool tip of a finger would be a refreshment to him! Who can picture to himself the torture he must have suffered!

Another thing we learn from this that he asks to have his tongue cooled. Remember, we read at the beginning of the text that, while living here on earth, he "fared sumptuously every day." He delighted in nothing more than to feast and drink and be merry, to tickle his palate with precious wines and viands! And lo! after his death it is his tongue in which he is punished the most. See the terrible justice of God, which in the world to come will punish the wicked for those very sins in which they have indulged most, and in those members which here they abused most in the service of sin!

And this torment which they will suffer by the fire of hell in their body will not be all that they will have to endure. There will be also their worm that will not die. They will suffer the most terrible mental agony. They will, in the first place, be tortured by the pangs of an evil conscience. When Dives had requested Abraham to send Lazarus, that he might give him a little relief, Abraham said: "Son, remember . . . thou art tormented." O what a dreadful rebuke was contained in these words! In his lifetime God had showered His blessings upon him; He had tried to lead him to repentance by His goodness; he also, as we can see from what Abraham says later, had had Moses and the prophets, had had an opportunity to hear the Word of God, but had rejected it; he had abused the gifts of God for revelry and drunkenness, had closed his heart against the misery of his fellow-men, when Lazarus lay suffering at his door. Surely, did he not deserve to be punished now?—Thus will the voice of the conscience upbraid the damned in hell. It will tell them: Your punishment is just, you deserve to be burning here in this lake of fire. You desired nothing better. How often did God warn you and call you and urge you to turn from your evil ways, but you would not listen! You have nobody to blame but yourself. Thus their conscience will continually upbraid them; their wickedness and sins will forever be before them, and will not give them a moment's rest. Ah, do you know what it means to have an evil conscience, to have your sins come home to you, giving you no rest day or night, driving you to despair? Ah, if that worm can thus torture us in this world, what, then, will be the agony it will inflict upon the damned in the flames of hell, where their worm dieth not!

And this mental suffering will be increased by the remembrance of all the good they have enjoyed in this life. "Remember, son,

that thou in thy lifetime receivedst good things." Oh, how many blessings God does shower upon us here in this world! The damned in hell will all have enough good things to remember that they enjoyed in this world. And now? Alas! gone, gone forever! Instead of their pleasant home yonder, now the dungeon of hell; instead of their clothing, nakedness and a shroud of fire; in the place of meat and drink, gnawing hunger and burning thirst, and not even a drop of water to cool their burning tongue! Oh, how dreadful the remembrance and the comparison must be to them!

And besides this remembrance of the good things that they enjoyed upon earth, there will be another thing to increase their agony and to tantalize them. We are told of Dives that "in hell he lift up his eyes, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." The damned in hell can see the saints in heaven! They can see, or, at any rate, they know, how they are gathered around the throne of God, rejoicing in His presence, singing their hallelujahs and songs of praise to the glory of His name. Oh, what a dreadful, dreadful sight to them it must be!

Still another thing to increase their misery will be the company of all the other damned and of the devils. We read towards the end of the text that Dives asks Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers that were yet living, to warn them, "lest they also come into this place of torment." Why did he do that? Do you think he felt pity for his brothers? No, indeed; the damned know no pity. Like the devil, they gloat in the sufferings of others, and, as far as that is concerned, would rather see all the human race condemned with them than to see a single soul in heaven. But Dives was afraid of the company of his brothers, afraid that they would upbraid him, because he had been their leader in wickedness and had thus been instrumental in bringing them there. He was afraid that their presence would enhance his misery. — And truly, is it not a dreadful thought to be in the company of none but devils, who gloat in the sufferings of their victims, and in the company of men, who are little better than devils, who know of no pity for each other, but only seek to increase each other's sufferings and misery!

But the most terrible thing of all is this, that in that suffering of hell there will be no rest and respite, and — oh, mark it well! — no deliverance into all eternity! When Dives asked for only a little relief, what answer did he receive? His request was denied. "Son, remember," etc. Not even the hundredth part of a drop of water can he get with which to cool his tongue, not the least relief, not a moment's respite from his indescribable torments! Because he led a life of sin and would not repent in the hour of grace, he must now drain the bitter cup of the wrath of God without a drop of sweetness to temper it, must burn in the flames of hell without as much as a minute's, a second's rest! O terrible thought! terrible



beyond conception and endurance!—he must burn forever! “And beside all this . . . come from thence.” Ah, there is an impassable gulf fixed between heaven and hell, which none can cross. Those that are once in hell, in the place of torment, must stay there forever. Oh! forever, forever, that is the hell of hell! Oh, who can endure the thought: endless misery, endless torment! And yet it is true! For God’s Word says so, and it cannot lie. Oh! what a just and holy God, to punish forever those who transgress against His righteousness and justice. O sinner, flee, flee from the wrath to come, flee to the wounds of Christ, the only place where you can find refuge and shelter! God grant that we all may be preserved from being doomed to that place of indescribable misery and neverending torment! To this end let us now inquire, in the second place, how we may escape it.

## 2.

Our text plainly tells us how we can avoid the wrath to come. When the rich man requested Abraham to send Lazarus that he might warn his brothers, Abraham answered: “Let them hear Moses and the prophets.” To hear the Word of God, to accept it with a believing heart and live a godly life according to it: that is the way to avoid the place of torment and to flee from the wrath to come.

Dives was not satisfied with this declaration of Abraham. He insisted on it that Lazarus must go: “Nay, father Abraham . . . repent.” He believed that the simple preaching of the Word had not convincing power enough to induce his brothers to leave their evil ways and turn towards God. He imagined it required something special to convert them, some great miracle must happen, somebody from the dead must go and tell them about the future world, then they would believe.

That is the way flesh and reason always thinks. Not infrequently atheists and materialists boast: “Pshaw! it’s all nonsense what you Christians talk and believe about God and eternity, about heaven and hell. I only believe what I can see. If I could see God, if He would tell me Himself that what the Bible teaches is true, or if He would send some one to prove to me by a miracle that he was sent by Him, or if a person would arise from the dead and tell me about the condition of affairs beyond the grave, then I, too, might believe.

Such language is idle and foolish. Abraham says to Dives: “If they hear not . . . from the dead.” He that will not believe the Word of God would not believe even if a person arose from the dead to preach to him, or if a miracle were done to prove the truth of what is being preached, yea, if God Himself, or an angel, would speak to him from heaven. For all these things might be optical illusions and deceptions of our senses. We could never build our faith upon them. And those very people who clamor loudest for them, most probably would be the ones to cast them aside as frauds

and impositions. There are many examples on record where these and like things have failed to turn people from their evil ways and bring them to repentance. I need only remind you of God's revelation of His majesty on Mount Sinai followed so soon by Israel's base idolatry, and of the rejection of Christ by the Jews in the face of His numerous miracles proving His divine mission. Ah, surely it remains true what Abraham says: "If they hear not," etc.

Nay, the only means of effectually converting the sinner is the Word of God. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," nothing can convert men. The Word of God alone is certain; upon it alone we can rely; it will not, it cannot deceive us. Peter, comparing this Word of God with the glorious revelation of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, calls it "a more sure word of prophecy" than that revelation had been. "My words shall not pass away," says Christ. — And not only is the Bible the only certain and solid foundation upon which our faith can rest, but it alone has the power to convert the soul and bring forth true faith in the heart. The Word of God "is quick and powerful . . . intents of the heart," Hebr. 4, 12. And this power to stir the heart and to convert the sinner and preserve him in the faith the Bible has often shown. Think of the untold numbers it converted "from the power of Satan unto God" in heathen lands in the days of the apostles! Think of all the hundreds and thousands of martyrs, who died amidst the most dreadful tortures, confessing their faith to the very last, because they were firmly convinced that the teachings of the Bible were the truth. Ah, indeed, "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Oh, therefore let us hear this Word of God! But let us not merely hear it externally, by coming to church and listening to the sermon. That will do you little good, nay, it will only increase your damnation, if nothing more follows! Let us hear the Word of God with the ears of our heart; let us accept its teachings with a believing heart; let us appropriate its promises; let us, above all, accept the glorious Gospel truth that "Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners," to save them from sin, the devil, and eternal torments in hell. Let us flee to Him for refuge and salvation, and trust in Him alone. And then let us also act out our faith in our life; let us learn to shun sin, from which we have been redeemed by Christ, and to lead a godly life, in accordance with the Word of God, and thus prove by our life that His Word is in our heart. Thus, and thus alone, can we hope to avoid the place of torments. Then let death come — it can harm us none; for when our soul leaves the body, the angels of God will come and carry it, like that of Lazarus, into the bosom of Abraham, where we shall be comforted forever. God grant unto all of us such a blessed end for Jesus' sake! Amen.

G. L.



## Sermon on Spiritualism.

1 JOHN 4, 2. 3.

Our Savior says: "I am the Truth." And when Pilate asked Him: "Art Thou a king, then?" Jesus answered: "I am a King," but a King of Truth. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Christ, however, not only taught and preached the truth, but He also earnestly warns against all false prophets and teachers. He says: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing," *i. e.*, who try to lead you astray with smooth words, "but inwardly they are ravening wolves," *i. e.*, they will destroy your souls and lead you into eternal damnation. Christ furthermore says that just at the end of the world many false prophets shall arise, and that error shall be so powerful as to cause thousands upon thousands to be deceived, yea, if it were possible, even the very elect.

As Christ, even so the apostles have done. They faithfully preached the true doctrine, and just as earnestly warned against false doctrine. St. Paul says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." And again: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Indeed, the apostle directly states that such false teachers are a visitation of God upon such as will not accept God's Word, but despise it. He says: "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth."

And as Christ and the apostles have done, thus should all true preachers now not only teach the truth, but they should also oppose all false doctrine and bear witness against all error. Such an error is the doctrine of Spiritualism, against which I would faithfully warn you.

Let me therefore apply the words of our text in such a manner as to answer the question:

### WHY CAN NO TRUE CHRISTIAN BECOME OR REMAIN A SPIRITUALIST?

1. *Because Spiritualism denies the chief doctrines of Holy Scripture;*
2. *Because the distinctive doctrine of Spiritualists, of the manifestation of departed spirits, is expressly rejected in Holy Scripture.*

## 1.

Our text reads: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." This declaration is oftentimes perverted and misapplied. Many claim it to necessarily follow, that all those have the Spirit of God who confess this sentence with their mouths: Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Consequently, they say, no sect is to be rejected as unchristian, or antichristian, which does not wholly deny Christ.

But this sentence contains more than appears at the first glance. It must be so explained as to harmonize with the whole Scripture.

Whoever confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh must acknowledge the whole Bible, the Old and the New Testament, to be God's own Word. For alone from the Bible do we know Christ. In it we find the prophecies of Him and their fulfillment; in it He has revealed Himself.—Only he confesses from his heart that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh who believes the whole Bible to be God's Word, and that the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

It is furthermore true, that whosoever really confesses our text: that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, must also confess the *same* Jesus Christ Holy Scripture confesses. The Old Testament says: "Thou art my Son"—"Sit Thou at my right hand." The New Testament says: "This Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life"—"Christ is God above all, blessed forever." Only that spirit, therefore, is of God which confesses: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord."

Whosoever sincerely professes: "I believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," must also confess, according to Scripture, the purpose for which Christ is come: he must confess that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that He has borne the sins of all mankind, reconciled all men with God, and purchased for all an eternal righteousness. For Scripture says: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Only that spirit, therefore, is of God which confesses: "I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood."

And lastly, only he confesses this sentence, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, who confesses with Holy Scripture that all grace, righteousness, and salvation is received and attained alone by faith,



that we are saved, not by our works or merit, but by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. For it is written: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

These are all fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture. Every one of us has heard them from the days of our childhood. Every pupil of our schools knows these doctrines. Every one of us, even the weakest with respect to spiritual knowledge, knows, that whosoever disturbs these doctrines disturbs the foundations of Christendom. Whosoever denies these doctrines denies Christendom, and actually ceases to be a Christian.

Let us now make the application on spiritualists. They deny just these chief doctrines. This sect teaches that Holy Scripture is not God's revealed Word from which alone we have all rules of faith and life. They deny that Jesus is true God. They deny the doctrine of sin and of reconciliation through Christ. They deny that man may be made righteous, and be saved, alone through faith in Christ. They deny the doctrine of the Trinity, of the resurrection of the body, and of eternal damnation.

God's Word says: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." "It is written." The spiritualists say: No, not the Bible, but the revelations of the spirit world are the fountains of truth. — God's Word says: "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord." The spiritualists say: No, Jesus is not the Son of God. — God's Word says: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." The spiritualists say: No, every man must work out his own salvation and be his own savior. — God's Word says: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." Spiritualists say: No, God is not triune; the Son is not God; the Holy Ghost is not God. — God's Word says: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Spiritualists say: No, you must enter heaven by virtue of your own works, honesty, and righteousness. — God's Word says: "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Christ repeatedly says: "I will raise him up at the last day." Spiritualists say: No, the flesh or the body will not be resurrected, but will remain in the grave. — God's Word says: "They shall go away into everlasting punishment." Spiritualists say: No, there is no everlasting punishment, there is no hell.

These are fundamental doctrines to which Holy Scripture clings, but which spiritualists deny. God's Word affirms, the spiritualists deny them.

And now I ask each and every one of you who still fears the Word of God, who still believes the Bible to be God's Word, who still loves Jesus Christ as his Savior and desires to be saved by Him: Can a true Christian become or remain a spiritualist? You certainly will say: No, for Spiritualism denies the chief doctrines of Holy Scripture. As little as fire and water can agree, or lies and truth, as little as Christ and Belial can have concord, so little can Spiritualism and the doctrine of Holy Writ be united. The sentence is passed in our text: "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."

But some one might inquire: How is it possible that so many are deceived by such plain contradictions of the truth? I answer: Partly, because many do not immediately notice that so many and such important doctrines are denied; partly, because this sect beguiles the simple-hearted with splendid speeches and perverted and misapplied passages of Holy Scripture.

## 2.

But a true Christian can, furthermore, not become or remain a spiritualist, because the distinctive teaching of the spiritualists, of the manifestation of departed spirits, is expressly rejected in Holy Scripture.

The Bible divides all men upon earth into two classes: believers and unbelievers, children of light and children of darkness, blessed and accursed. Scripture furthermore states that after this life there are but two places to which men go: heaven and hell, salvation and damnation. The Bible also says that the soul of each man at the moment of his death goes at once to one of these places, either into heaven or into hell. Of Lazarus our Lord Jesus says: "He was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Of the rich man Jesus says: "He also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." To the malefactor our Savior says: "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Of Judas Iscariot we read that he hanged himself and went "to his own place." St. Paul says: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ." Stephen prays: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" And then again it is said of the unbeliever: "Cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "And thou be cast into prison."

And now the question arises: Can the departed spirits return to this earth? Can they manifest themselves to the living, make all sorts of communications, give warnings, fill the hearts with nobler



impulses? Spiritualists declare they can, while Holy Scripture declares they cannot.

Let me draw your attention to a few passages. The first passage is 2 Sam. 12, 23: "Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David's child had died; its soul had gone to heaven. Now David says: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The second passage is Job 7, 9, 10: "He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him anymore." The third passage is Luke 16, 29: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." It is related that Dives, when he was in hell and in torments, prayed Abraham to send Lazarus from heaven to earth for the purpose of warning his five brothers, telling them of the state beyond the grave, lest they also come into that place of torment. But Abraham says: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." Christ, therefore, says: Nobody returns from heaven to earth, to make communications, to warn, to fill the hearts with nobler impulses.

And now we take the passage Deut. 18, 9—12: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer;" and God then adds: "For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord."

Hence it is clear: the departed spirits cannot return into this world, neither the blessed nor the damned, to manifest themselves to the living.

But how can we explain the declarations of spiritualists, who say: "We have, with our own ears, heard the spirits of our departed children, husbands, wives, or relatives speaking; they have made all kinds of communications unto us; we have seen their manifestations with our own eyes"? I answer: These so-called manifestations are either a deception of the devil, a spook, a work of the devil, or a fraud perpetrated by man — and that they are probably in most cases.

But can the devil work such a deception? He can. Remember King Saul. Of Saul we know that in the beginning of his career he was, by the grace of God, a great king, but that he forsook God and rejected His Word. And therefore God also rejected him. Now, on the eve of a great battle with the Philistines, Saul was anxious to know the outcome of it. And because God would answer him no more, he went to a witch at Endor, who had a familiar spirit. He asked this woman to bring up Samuel unto him. The woman used her witchcraft, and she saw an old man coming up, covered with

a mantle, like unto Samuel. Then Saul asked, and the apparition answered. Who was this apparition? Was it really Samuel? Surely not, it was the devil. Why? I ask of you: If God would not answer Saul, do you suppose that Samuel would come from heaven to answer him? Certainly not!

I ask furthermore: Do you think it possible for a witch to disturb the blessed rest of Samuel with her witchery? Surely not! We believe that the blessed have entered into heavenly rest. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest." "They are in God's hand." Is it conceivable, therefore, that the blessed could be kept in constant motion and unrest by the commands of the spiritualists, to appear here and there to stand questioning? That is altogether absurd. Nobody can believe that who still holds to the true doctrine of eternal blessedness.

But someone might think: Could not Samuel have appeared upon God's command through this witch? I answer: No, for then God, who has so strictly forbidden witchery, and the using of familiar spirits, and necromancy, would in fact have approved of it. Besides, that apparition said unto Saul: "To-morrow shalt thou be with me." Should the spirit of the saintly Samuel be at one and the same place with the spirit of the godless Saul, the suicide? Surely not!—But it is a fact, Saul was really at one and the same place on the next day with the apparition, namely, with the devil.

From this story we learn that the devil can deceive men by appearing in various human shapes.

In most cases, however, these so-called manifestations are nothing but fraud, perpetrated by man, for which many instances could be cited.

But does not Holy Scripture itself record such manifestations of departed spirits, the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration of Christ? Does this not establish the fact, that departed souls may manifest themselves? Not at all. For Elijah and Moses did not appear as mere souls or spirits, but as persons with body and soul. Of Elijah we know that he was translated into heaven with body and soul; and of Moses we read that God Himself buried him, and that "no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day;" which some godly men explain thus, that Moses was resurrected by God immediately after death and translated into the heavenly paradise.

My dear hearers, take this warning and admonition to heart. Remember these three passages. The one is Deut. 18, 9—12. (See above.) The other passage is Is. 63, 16: "Doubtless, Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting." And the third one is the word of our Lord:



“They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.” — Have nothing to do, therefore, with spiritualists. Do not attend their meetings, not even for mere curiosity’s sake; for who knows what may befall you there. Remember God’s terrible judgment in permitting thousands upon thousands to create a new religion out of an old heathenish delusion, cheating themselves out of their soul’s salvation. Let us ever hear Moses and the prophets, *i. e.*, God’s Word. Let that be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Amen.

H. S. (*Tr. by C. R.*)

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## Sermon on Matt. 17, 1—8.

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At a certain time our Lord Jesus Christ went up into a mountain to pray, taking Peter, James, and John with Him. Here these three disciples were witnesses of the transfiguration of their Master. They saw their Lord in His majesty and glory; for His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was whiter than snow. That was, indeed, a most beautiful sight, something which never has been nor will be witnessed again in this world, something which only the elect will see in heaven.

At the same time, they saw something which the eyes of mortal men have never seen: they saw two other men, who appeared unto them in glory; and although they had never seen these two men before, they knew them at once. One of them was Moses, Israel’s lawgiver of old times, and the other Elias, one of the most renowned prophets of the Old Covenant. No wonder that Peter, when he saw his Master in such glory, exclaimed: “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”

But in this he was badly deceived. He soon found out that it is utterly impossible for mortal man to behold the glory of God on high. For “while he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” And when they saw that bright cloud and heard the majestic voice of the Lord, their hearts were filled with awe. Terror-stricken, they fell to the earth on their face and were sore afraid. And I really believe that if Jesus had not been with them, they would have died for fright over the glorious things they had seen, and the majestic voice of the Lord which they had heard.

But what did our Savior do? He came to them and touched them with His divine hands, saying, “Arise, and be not afraid.” And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man *save Jesus only*.

That was enough for them, that was all they wished for, *to see*

*and hear Jesus, and Jesus only.* The best thing, after all, for the three disciples, was not the excessive strain of transfiguration, nor the delectable company of the two great men who appeared with Jesus, but the equally glorious but less exciting society of "Jesus only." When they saw Him in His everyday attire, it was quite as useful to them, as when He robed Himself in splendor. Moses was gone, Elias was gone. "Jesus only" remained with them. Jesus only, the common Jesus of every day, the humble and meek Jesus walking amongst men, is all we need. To see and hear Jesus, who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, is a better thing for us, while we are in this body, than the sight of the Exalted in His glory, in the excellency of His majesty. That is the command of the Lord regarding Him: Hear ye Him!—and if we hear Him, as we should do, we shall surely see, that is, believe, trust, and confide in Him. The company and fellowship of our meek Jesus, who died for our sins, is all we should desire and look for. The lesson we should learn is:

### SEE AND HEAR JESUS ONLY!

1. *In your daily life;*
2. *In your church life.*

#### 1.

We are apt to set our eyes and the desires of our hearts on things which have a great showing in the world. Naturally, we seek the treasures which have a great value in this world. Great wealth is what man naturally craves. The eyes and hearts of many people are blinded by the glitter of gold and silver, so much so, that they can hardly see anything else. Others are more inclined to seek honor and glory among their fellow-men. They strive ambitiously to attain a high position in society. They are bent upon becoming famous in the world. Still others look for the pleasures of this life. If they can only be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, like the rich man, that is all they wish for and desire.—Everybody has something upon which he sets his eyes; but how few are they that see and hear Jesus, and Jesus only!

Now we all know very well that we seldom succeed in obtaining that which we desire and look for. In the end we find that we have been toiling without avail. We have been looking for things which we could not reach. And even if we should succeed in building up castles, just as we had desired them, what benefit would that be for us in the end? The richest of all rich people must depart this life, and is then poorer than the poorest beggar. We are all aware that the crowned heads of kings and emperors must eventually bow before that terrible foe called death. And who can describe the terrible sufferings, the awful pangs of conscience, when the spendthrift must



face death? The awful words, "Remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things," will sound in his ears. Why should we therefore set our eyes and hearts on things which in no way can give us peace and true and lasting happiness!

A striking illustration of this fact we saw at the Pan-American Exhibition. There one could behold grand sights, the greatest works of art. But how suddenly was all this glory dimmed as with a dark cloud, and the glad voices of admiring thousands hushed in awe-stricken silence, when death came upon the scene and laid the nation's chief magistrate low!

Do not try to climb up mountains of gold and silver. Shut your eyes against all mountains of honor and glory in this life and against all mountains of lusts and sinful pleasures. Keep down in the valley, see and hear Jesus, and "Jesus only." Remain in companionship, in fellowship with Him. If you wish for riches, He has treasures in store for you which are worth more than all the gold and silver in the whole world. If you want honor and glory, He is willing to put an everlasting crown upon your head. If you want joy and pleasure, then let me tell you, peace and true happiness can be found in "Jesus only." Though He should lead you through the valley of sorrow and death, the day is not far distant when your transfiguration shall take place. Then you shall see Him face to face in the light of His divine glory and majesty. Then shall your face shine like the sun; then you shall be clothed in the robes of heavenly bliss and happiness.

Having heard why we should see and hear "Jesus only" in our daily life and in our everyday's dealings with other people, let us also hear why we should see and hear "Jesus only" in our church life, *i. e.*, as members of the universal Church of Christ, in our dealings with other Christians.

## 2.

All Christians do not see and hear "Jesus only." In the first place, there are not a few Christians who see and hear Moses, the lawgiver, more than they see and hear Jesus, the Fulfiller of the Law. They seem to have more delight in seeing and hearing Moses than Christ. That was the great difficulty with the Jewish people, especially with the Pharisees and scribes of old. They thought that by seeing and hearing Moses, *i. e.*, by living up to the teachings of Moses outwardly, they could work out their own salvation, and therefore they despised and shunned our gracious Lord. Up to this day, there are many who profess to be Christians, that look with one eye to Moses for their salvation and with the other eye to Christ; they only partially trust and confide in Him. You often hear of Christians who glory in their own works, who put their trust in their religious feelings and experiences. They think they are good and perfect, and

they feel so happy, and although they trust in these outward things, they, at the same time, profess that Jesus is their only Master, Lord, and Savior.

Others, especially the Roman Catholics, are taught, that our Savior did partially redeem us from our sins, but for the rest we must ourselves work out our own salvation. All these Christians are trying to see and hear Moses, the lawgiver, with one eye and one ear, and, at the same time, to see and hear Jesus, the blessed Savior, with the other eye and ear.

That is a thing which nobody can do. No one can serve two masters at the same time. Therefore you should always remember that Moses and Elias are gone. "Jesus only" you should see and hear. It is good enough for us to see and hear Moses. It is even necessary for us to learn and search the teachings of Moses in the Ten Commandments, in order that we might know what damnable and lost sinners we are, and that we may repent of our sins. But in things pertaining to our spiritual and eternal welfare we must send Moses away, shut our eyes against Moses, and see and hear "Jesus only," trust in Christ and His holy Gospel. Moses can show you your sins, transgressions, and iniquities, but the blood of Jesus only can cleanse you from all sins; for Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Rom. 10, 4.) If you want to participate in the glorious transfiguration in the heavenly abodes, all that is necessary for you to do is to remain in close fellowship with your blessed Savior, to see and hear "Jesus only."

Then again we read that not only Moses but Elias was gone. Elias was a servant of God, a very great man, and especially the Jews were full of expectations regarding him, as the Lord had promised to send Elias once more to them. So great was their esteem for Elias that some of them even thought our Lord and Savior might be the promised Elias.

In our days there are many Eliases, that is, great and famous preachers, who, through the power of their speech, gather many thousands of people around them as often as they enter the pulpit, gifted men, who bring multitudes to their churches and create a sensation; for almost everybody naturally has a desire to see and hear such great preachers. But do these great preachers preach Christ, and Him crucified? Although they may create a sensation when they speak in public, no one can be saved by seeing and hearing them.

Whenever you enter your church, then, go there not to see and to hear the preacher, but to see and to hear "Jesus only." If you do that sincerely, you will experience what Peter said to Christ: "Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou hast words of eternal life.*" Follow the disciples' example. Go and do likewise. See and hear "Jesus only"! Amen.

OTTO W—H.